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Cohen takes aim at readiness

Leaders fear return to hollow force days

By Jon R. Anderson
Staff writer

WASHINGTON — Defense Secretary William Cohen is gathering his top brass over concerns about dwindling readiness.

On April 23, Cohen started what will become a series of meetings on readiness issues with Joint Chiefs Chairman Gen. Henry H. Shelton, along with the four service chiefs and a handful of other senior leaders.

One senior Pentagon official said the "tank sessions," as such high-level gatherings are called, are designed to address Cohen's concerns that readiness reporting is not as accurate or predictive as it needs to be.

"There's a lot of anecdotal evidence out there that readiness is slipping. What the secretary is trying to do is get to the bottom of it all and see if we really have a problem," the official said.

The look at readiness began as Congress considered a supplemental budget bill designed

to cover \$2 billion in unexpected costs for operations in the Middle East and Bosnia and Herzegovina. Congress passed the bill and President Clinton signed it amid warnings from Pentagon officials that training and all nonessential operations would grind to a virtual standstill without the funding.

But it's no secret things are already tight throughout all corners of the military.

Defense spending is at its lowest level in recent memory, and while forces have been cut considerably, much of the remaining funds have been fenced for weapons modernization efforts. That means little is left over for things like training and maintenance.

Everyone from top regional commanders to pilots, platoon leaders and ship drivers out at sea are raising the specter of a return to the hollow force days of the 1970s. Indeed, stories in the press and reports within the military itself suggest cracks are already beginning to show.

A March 20 report from the General Accounting Office, the

investigative arm of Congress, said that half of the Army's 10 divisions were suffering from significant manpower shortages.

In 1st Armored Division's 1st Brigade, for example, only 16 out of 116 tanks had full crews and were qualified for combat, the GAO reported. In 1st Infantry Division, two brigades were short almost half of the infantrymen needed to man Bradley fighting vehicles.

During the latest flair in tensions with Iraq, ships deploying to the Persian Gulf were struggling with manpower shortages of their own. The nuclear-powered aircraft carrier George Washington, for example, which is supposed to be manned by as many 6,000 sailors, was staffed with only 4,500. That's 1,000 fewer than it had on its last cruise to the region just two years ago.

All four services are having trouble keeping their aviators from leaving. Despite bonus increases and other incentives, pilots still are leaving in droves.

"The lessons learned about a

hollow military after World War I, World War II, the Korean conflict and Vietnam must not be ignored now," the head of the U.S. European Command, Gen. Wesley K. Clark, told the Senate on March 3.

Funding shortfalls, for example, have caused "significant shortages" in spare parts for the F-15E squadrons in Europe, he said. So much, in fact, that the "get-well date is not until May of 1999."

Clark also warned Congress that "back-to-back peacekeeping or humanitarian operations of the kind we have experienced since 1994 hinder the ability of combat units to maintain their readiness for high-intensity combat operations."

The Pentagon is trying to gauge the severity of the problem.

"We're trying to find out what our threshold of pain is. And make sure we're not anesthetized to it," said another top official privy to the content of Cohen's meetings.

At the same time, he said, there is a sense that perhaps some of the military's top leadership may be reluctant to be forthcoming with bad news on

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readiness.

"No one wants to look like the kid who cried wolf. It's a matter of what point do you say 'I'm concerned' without appearing like you're maneuvering for additional resources."

Another problem, he added, was that "military people are can-do people — they'll make do with what they've got and do whatever it takes to get the job done."

That attitude, he said, is both a virtue and an Achilles' heel. "It really is a strength, but on the other hand, if you don't fix what might just be a small problem early enough, it will just become a real big problem later on."

In that vein, Cohen and Shelton want to see if better management tools can be put in place to provide top commanders with a way to gauge readiness issues before they become a problem.

Currently, the Defense Department uses two systems to monitor readiness.

The Joint Monthly Readiness Review, or "Jammer" in military-speak, is designed to assess how actual forces on the ground in the various regional commands would be distributed if two wars were to break out in different parts of the world. The scenarios alternate each month between a clash with Iraq starting first, followed shortly

by combat in Korea, or the reverse, with Korea flaring up first.

The second readiness gauge is the Status of Readiness and Training System, also called SORTS, which tracks how individual units are manned, how much maintenance needs to be done on vehicles and gear, and how training is going.

While both systems provide a good "here and now" perspective, they lack the ability to identify trends.

"There is some frustration that Jammer and SORTS don't give us everything we need," said Navy Capt. Steve Petrepaoli, spokesman for Shelton. "What we want is a way to

identify problems before they happen."

For example, he said, Jammer "captured the problems with pilot and infantry shortages, but we got it as it was happening, not ahead of the curve."

Officials say the biggest problem has been managing the readiness levels in units that are not on the first-to-fight roster.

War plans call for some units to be ready to fight at a moment's notice. Those are mostly forward-deployed forces and units in the United States on call for rapid deployment. It's those units that have priority for manning along with training and maintenance funds.

Washington Post

May 5, 1998

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Albright Presses Israelis On Talks

She Sees Arafat, Too; Says It's Time To Act

By Barton Gellman
Washington Post
Staff Writer

LONDON, May 4—Secretary of State Madeleine K. Albright bore down on Israel's prime minister tonight at what she told him was a decisive moment in his moribund peace talks with the Palestinians, pressing for concessions he has vowed repeatedly not to make.

Albright crisscrossed central London twice between Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu and Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat, but aides said she devoted far more time and intensity to the Israeli. Officials traveling with her sought to raise the stakes by intimating that the present phase of U.S. mediation was near an end -- succeed or fail.

"Clearly the focus of our efforts in terms of these discussions, as evidenced by the time spent in the meetings and [our public explanations of] the gaps, is on the Israelis," said a

senior member of Albright's delegation. "The Palestinians have signaled general acceptance of our ideas, and that's why the focus of our efforts now is to convince the Israelis to make the decisions necessary to see our way for a breakthrough."

Dispatching aides to meet through the night with Netanyahu's inner core of advisers, Albright laid plans for one more push at a Tuesday morning meeting with the Israeli premier. Officials said she had not budged from the U.S. insistence -- described still, euphemistically, as a set of "ideas" -- that Israel withdraw from an additional 13.1 percent of the West Bank in return for a detailed sequence of Palestinian security measures.

Last month Netanyahu engineered a cabinet vote authorizing a 9 percent withdrawal, and he hinted at, without directly offering, 11 percent in separate meetings today with Albright and British Prime Minister Tony Blair.

Today's diplomatic marathon, which overran scheduled departures from London by all three leaders, highlighted the new primacy of U.S.-Israeli negotiations over direct talks between Israelis and Palestinians. For Arafat, positioned as the beneficiary of a dispute between Israel and its major patron, the present alignment is a windfall without precedent in the years since the United States assumed its mediating role.

"He's in a splendid mood," said one old Arafat associate who spent time with him today. "He's preparing to walk out with his bravado act, his theatrics. He's actually in a wonderful situation. He has America as his staunch ally against the Israelis."

Today's meetings came amid strong anxiety, in the Clinton administration and among the parties themselves, that time is running out on the historic experiment in Israeli-Palestinian peace.

Exactly a year from today, a

five-year calendar expires for the "interim period" devised by Israelis and Palestinians as a transition to permanent Palestinian self-rule. To meet the May 4, 1999, deadline for a final agreement, the two sides now must resolve the disputes closest to the core of their conflict -- Palestinian statehood and borders, the return of Arab refugees, the division of water resources and the status of Jerusalem.

That looks increasingly improbable because Israelis and Palestinians have yet to hold their first substantive talks on any of the so-called "permanent status" issues. The talks opened formally in May 1996 at the Egyptian resort of Taba, but they did not resume after Netanyahu unseated Shimon Peres as prime minister a few weeks later.

Before they can take up the hardest issues, Israel and the Palestinians need to fulfill the interim commitments they made in their 1993 Declaration of Principles -- the breakthrough accord signed on the White House South Lawn -- and implementing agreements signed in 1994 and 1995. Among those remaining are

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further Israeli withdrawals from the West Bank, final revision of the Palestinian National Covenant, opening of a Palestinian airport and seaport, and effective Palestinian efforts to prevent and punish political violence against Israelis.

"We think this is a decisive set of meetings, and we want action," said James P. Rubin, Albright's spokesman and close adviser. "Failure to put the peace process back on track will carry grave risks of disillusionment and violence in the Middle East."

"At this point," he added, "we don't have compelling evidence that the meetings will yield a breakthrough."

Before leaving Jerusalem, Netanyahu referred angrily to the widely reported U.S. proposal for a 13.1 percent withdrawal from the West Bank, which American officials acknowledge privately but do not discuss in public.

"If I don't capitulate to these demands, will I be branded an obstacle to peace?" Netanyahu asked. "I can save you the suspense. Of course. Of course, they'll point fingers at me. So what?"

Here in London, Netanyahu avoided confrontation. He told Israeli reporters in Hebrew that after some six hours of talks with Albright today, "the Americans understand better than before our attitudes and the reasons for them." Albright's proposals, he added, would call for a new meeting of Israel's cabinet to discuss them.

A top-ranking Israeli official, briefing the Hebrew-language media, maintained that Netanyahu and Albright "hardly discussed" the question of how much territory Israel should vacate to cement the interim agreement. American officials portrayed that as a central subject of their talks, and one on which the two leaders profoundly disagreed.

"I am committed to accepting the American initiative although our rights go far beyond that," Arafat told reporters today, speaking Arabic. "If Prime Minister Netanyahu is seriously concerned and interested in peace, today is the day."

David Bar-Illan, Netan-

yahu's director of communications, said "it would be utterly impossible for Israel to adhere to withdrawal of 13 percent."

Should Netanyahu stand by that position, President Clinton will have a difficult decision on his hands. Vice President Gore committed to Arafat in Ramallah last week that the administration would not budge below 13 percent, a figure far closer to Israel's initial offer than to Arafat's demand. But Clinton

has shown little taste until now for a confrontation with Israel and its American backers.

"In many ways the future of the Middle East is now in the hands of the Clinton administration," said Ron Pundak, an Israeli academic who led the secret talks in Oslo, Norway, that produced the first Israeli-Palestinian accord. "They can push this area into peace, or they will bear part of the responsibility for bloodshed."

Palestinian leaders, meanwhile, tried to goad the United States into action and appeal to world sentiment with attacks on Netanyahu's good faith.

"It's not a question of 13 percent or 11 percent," Palestinian negotiator Nabil Shaath said in an interview. "He wants to destroy this process. I won't change my mind unless today he accepts the American proposals."

India's New Defense Chief Sees Chinese Military Threat

New York Times
May 5, 1998

By John F. Burns

NEW DELHI, India -- Defense Minister George Fernandes has breached a longstanding taboo by declaring publicly that China, not Pakistan, is India's "potential threat No. 1." He also said India should move to declare itself a nuclear weapons state if a review of military policy by India's new government supports his view.

In a flurry of remarks at the weekend, Fernandes said India should awaken to the fact that Chinese military activities and alliances, notably those involving Pakistan, Burma and Tibet, had begun to "encircle" India. He urged Indians to abandon the "carelessness and casual attitude" that he said had characterized national security in recent decades, and to face up to the reality of what China was doing.

Referring to the brief border war between India and China in 1962, which ended a period of amity between the two nations, Fernandes said: "This is where our country has made mistakes in the past. We made those mistakes in the early 1950s, and we paid the price in the 1960s. I think things have not changed."

He added: "To underplay the situation across the Himalayas is not in the national interest; in fact, it can create a lot of problems for us in the future."

Indian newspapers gave front-page prominence Monday to Fernandes' remarks, which were made on Sunday in a television interview, in remarks

to reporters and in a formal lecture. Although Indian military experts outside the government have voiced concern about China's growing might, government leaders have generally avoided the issue.

But Fernandes, named to the defense post in the Hindu nationalist-led coalition government that took power six weeks ago, has made a touchstone of his warnings about China. Soon after taking office, he said he had learned from military briefings that Chinese troops based in southeastern Tibet had set up a helicopter landing pad inside Arunachal Pradesh, an Indian state in one of several Himalayan regions where there is a border dispute between the two countries.

Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee moved quickly to head off the controversy, saying there was no truth to the claim of a Chinese helipad on Indian territory. But Fernandes, who heads a regional Socialist party that is one of the coalition partners in Vajpayee's 14-party government, did not retract his statement, and moved well beyond it in his weekend remarks.

Monday Indian critics were quick to note that Fernandes has a long-established reputation as a radical on foreign and domestic policy, and has for many years adopted an adversarial attitude toward China, particular on Chinese policy on Tibet.

"The art of diplomacy lies in increasing the number of our friends and reducing the number of our adversaries," said K. Natwar Singh, a foreign policy

spokesman for the opposition Congress Party. "The defense minister is doing exactly the opposite."

Fernandes' warnings began in a lecture in New Delhi on Sunday in commemoration of V.P. Krishna Menon, who resigned as India's defense minister during the India-China war in October 1962, when he was widely accused of having underestimated the threat posed by a Chinese troop buildup on the border between Tibet and India. But the measured tones used in the lecture gave way later to more forceful remarks to reporters and in the interview with a television network.

In a transcript of the remarks that was provided by the network, Home TV, Fernandes outlined the Chinese military activities that he said threatened India.

"China has provided Pakistan with both missile as well as nuclear know-how," the transcript said. "China has its nuclear weapons stockpiled in Tibet right along our borders. They are not directed only against India; I am sure they are directed elsewhere also."

Fernandes said India would have to make "real economic sacrifices," presumably in increased military expenditures, if it was to counter the Chinese threat.

"We have become a very soft people, and we must realize that nations are not built through soft options, nor are the country's frontiers secured by a soft line," he said. "One has to be willing to live a hard life."

Hearing Tuesday For Back-Seat Crew Of Jet In Italian Cable-Car Crash

By Matthew L. Wald

JACKSONVILLE, N.C. -- Two U.S. Marine Corps officers who sat in the rear seats of a jet that clipped ski-lift cables in Italy three months ago face a military hearing on Tuesday that will test the degree to which crew members can be punished for the actions of those around them.

Twenty people died when the jet, an EA-6B Prowler, severed two cables that supported a gondola near Cavalese, in the Dolomites, on Feb. 3. The plane, based in Aviano, Italy, and used for jamming radar in Bosnia, was on a training mission.

Under Italian rules endorsed by the Marine Corps, the jet was supposed to fly at an altitude of at least 2,000 feet, but investigators say the crew planned a course at 1,000 feet and at several points flew much lower, slicing the cable 364 feet above the ground.

The Article 32 hearing here at Camp Lejeune, N.C., which will be watched closely by the Italian government, by legal experts and by members of the U.S. military, is akin to a civilian grand jury, except that it is a public session at which lawyers may mount a full defense in hopes of avoiding a court-martial for the two officers, Capt. Chandler P. Seagraves, 28, of Nineveh, Ind.; and Capt. William L. Raney II, 26, of Englewood, Colo.

The same procedure is set to begin June 15 for the pilot, Capt. Richard J. Ashby, 31, of Mission Viejo, Calif.; and the navigator, Capt. Joseph P. Schweitzer, 30, of Westbury, N.Y. Their lawyers said they had other cases scheduled for this week.

All branches of the military enforce a concept of group responsibility, especially if one member of a unit does something that the others know to be wrong.

The four Marines in this case are all charged with involuntary manslaughter. The charge requires a finding of

"culpable negligence," defined as a "culpable disregard for the foreseeable consequences to others" of an act or a failure to take a certain action. If convicted, they could be dishonorably discharged from the Marines, fined and sentenced to 10 years at the U.S. Disciplinary Barracks at Fort Leavenworth, Kan., a maximum-security prison run by the Army.

They are also charged with negligent homicide, a lesser offense, dereliction of duty and other charges.

The Prowler has a single set of controls, at the left front seat, but the officer on the right, technically known as electronic counter-measures officer 1, or ECMO 1, has duties like those of a co-pilot, including navigation and communicating with the ground.

The officers who sit in back, ECMO 2 and ECMO 3, face forward but are behind control panels for electronic jamming equipment that obscure their view to the front. A military lawyer for one of the back-seat crew members said that they can see forward through a gap in the instrument panel about the size of a coffee cup, and can see out windows in the sides and overhead.

All four crew members said in sworn statements that they had not knowingly violated the 1,000-foot minimum that they had planned to fly, investigators said. And they said they never heard an alarm from the plane's radar altimeter, a sound like the beeping of a microwave oven that on low-altitude flights is supposed to go off when the plane descends below a level specified by the pilot.

Marine Corps tactics call for flying the Prowler at high speeds, to increase maneuverability, and at low altitudes, to avoid radar by hiding behind terrain.

The Marines operations manual says that ECMO 1, in the front seat, "shall immediately challenge the pilot" if the radar altimeter sounds its warning tone. It also says, "All

ECMO's shall be prepared to advise the pilot of any corrective action required to avoid collision, i.e.: climb/descend, break right/left," based on what they see out the window, and that they "shall assist the pilot in spotting hazards of flight."

Veterans of Prowler service say that the question of whether crew members should be aware of the plane's altitude, and whether they should voice concerns to the pilot, is subtle and complicated. The back-seat crew may have had other duties, and thus may not have been aware of the speed and altitude, or may have been reluctant to speak up.

"It could be construed as back-seat driving," said a former crew member of a Marine Prowler who spoke on condition of anonymity. "It could be construed as safety of flight and you have to say it. It's context-sensitive, and there's a group dynamic in that airplane that you really can't explain if you haven't been on one."

Another former crew member, who is retired from the military and now works for a military contractor, said that if a crew member knew the plane was below the altitude given in the pre-flight briefing, "it was his responsibility to have said that if he perceived what was going on, and if he perceived that but did not state it, he is equally responsible."

In civilian life, said this former crew member, who also spoke on condition of anonymity, a pilot is traditionally responsible. But in a military plane, it was wrong to blame just the pilot if the crew concurred, he said.

"We don't do that in the Marines," he said. "There's a tradition of responsibility for the actions of the crew of which you are a member. That's not just a pilot driving people around."

A lawyer for Seagraves said the issue was "what would a reasonable person, under the same or similar circumstances, in the pilot's position, or the navigator's, or Seagraves', do

or be aware of?"

The lawyer, Capt. Paul E. Kaplan, said, "The main question that we're going to be taking a look at is not did the plane hit the cables, but why did the plane hit the cables? And is there anything that Captain Seagraves, if he's acting as a reasonable ECMO, can do about it?"

But along with the U.S. prosecutors, Italian officials believe that Seagraves and the other back-seat crew member, Raney, share some blame.

Two officers besides the Prowler's crew members may also face punishment. They are the commander of the squadron based in Aviano, Lt. Col. Richard Muegge, who may be charged as an accessory, and Capt. Brian Thayer, the safety officer of the Aviano squadron, who investigators said might have made a false statement to an Italian magistrate during the investigation.

Marine Corps officials also confirmed that two officers had been punished, apparently for trying to suppress evidence of unrelated violations in the air by members of a separate Prowler squadron.

The officers who were disciplined, without court-martial, belonged to a Prowler squadron in Cherry Point, N.C. After the accident in Italy, the commander of the Cherry Point squadron, Lt. Col. Stephen L. Watters, was relieved of command.

The Marine Corps would confirm only that the officers had received "nonjudicial punishment." A spokesman said that under privacy rules they could not describe the punishment. But an individual familiar with the case said that the former commander of the Cherry Point squadron was fined, was briefly confined to the base and was reprimanded with a letter put in his record.

In addition, the squadron's executive officer also "received administrative action," according to Marine officials.

Base-closing plan deadlocks Senate armed services panel Clinton seeks fifth round to cut costs in 2001

SCRIPPS HOWARD NEWS SERVICE

A Senate committee is scheduled to decide this week whether another politically unpopular round of military base closings is needed.

The Senate Armed Services Committee is expected to vote Wednesday or Thursday on a Clinton administration backed measure that would call for a fifth round of base closings to be held in 2001.

Senate officials say the committee remains locked in the 9-9 tie that left a nearly identical provision without the panel's backing last year. Undaunted, supporters brought the measure to the Senate floor, where it met a decisive demise.

That could be the fate as well of this year's attempt to get congressional approval to set up a commission that would recommend specific installations to be shut down.

Sponsors of this year's amendment, which would be attached to the fiscal 1999 defense authorization bill, haven't yet been able to budge any of the naysayers.

Given that this is an election year, the chances of swaying enough votes are even dimmer, said one Senate aide familiar with the progress of the amendment, which is being shepherded by Sens. John McCain, Arizona Republican, and Carl Levin, Michigan Democrat.

If the measure fails in committee again, its backers will bring it before the full Senate. But observers say that without the committee's support, there's almost no hope for it to prevail in the Senate.

The Pentagon, which says more bases need to be closed to pay for urgently needed new weapons and equipment, has virtually given up on the House, where members — all of whom face re-election in November — generally take an even more parochial view about these sorts of issues than the

Senate, where only a third must face voters this year.

The backers' strategy is to expect a loss in the House but a win in the Senate, then work out a deal later with House negotiators to create a closing commission.

But the base-closing cause in the House was complicated even more over the weekend when a White House memo surfaced, which a top Republican leader interpreted as evidence that the Clinton administration was trying to politically influence the base-closing process.

House Majority Leader Dick Armey, Texas Republican, accused acting Air Force Secretary Whitten Peters and deputy White House Chief of Staff John Podesta of trying to encourage a defense contractor to bid on work in Sacramento, Calif., where McClellan Air Force Base is scheduled to close in 2001. Mr. Armey said the administration was trying to improperly soften the blow of the base closing in a vote-rich state.

The White House said Mr. Armey was the one trying to politicize the process.

In the first four rounds of closings, about 100 of the military's 495 major facilities were targeted for extinction. Drawdowns in personnel since the end of the Cold War have left the United States with 36 percent fewer troops. But because there haven't been equivalent reductions in buildings and related structures, the country now has a military infrastructure 23 percent bigger than it needs.

Defense Secretary William S. Cohen has been lobbying for two more rounds of base closings, according to Pentagon and congressional sources.

"We could do two rounds in one," a Senate aide said.

That could result in as much as \$21 billion in savings by 2015, as well as \$3 billion a year after that, according to Mr. Cohen.

Cohen Wins Eisenhower Award For Leadership

WASHINGTON -- Secretary of Defense William S. Cohen has been named the 1998 recipient of the Dwight D. Eisenhower Leadership Prize.

The annual award, presented by The Eisenhower World Affairs Institute and Gettysburg College, recognizes a leader who has been influential in national and international arenas whose lifetime accomplishments reflect Dwight D. Eisenhower's legacy of integrity and leadership.

The award was given on Tuesday at the Washington Hilton and Towers.

Cohen began his service as secretary of defense in January 1997 after 24 years in Congress representing Maine. He spent six years in the House of Representatives and 18 years in the Senate.

"Secretary Cohen's efforts during the past 25 years to ensure a capable military and defense structure have helped secure peace during many trying periods," said Gettysburg College President Gordon A. Haaland in a press release.

"Bill Cohen's defining strength of character lies in his integrity and ability to provide thoughtful analysis to any given situation," added Rocco C. Siciliano, chairman of the Eisenhower World Affairs Institute.

The Mystery of the Tomb

Questions about the Vietnam 'Unknown Soldier' raise a new issue: with DNA testing, can we ever fill the crypt?

BY JOSHUA HAMMER

THE DEAD DO TELL TALES. UNDER fluorescent lights at the Army's main forensic laboratory in Hawaii, a team of anthropologists huddles over 15 foam-topped tables piled with human

bones. On one table lie the rodent-chewed femurs and pelvises of 11 airmen who perished when their B-17 bomber crashed in the jungles of Papua New Guinea in 1944. A few feet

away sits a bowl of blackened shards—all that's left of the pilot whose fighter jet went down in a ball of flame over Laos a generation later. Three nearly intact skeletons lie nearby, World War II GIs disinterred this year from the island of Okinawa. Slowly, the experts examine teeth, reassemble skulls and hunt for genetic codes in a quest to attach names to these remains. "Our capabilities have improved tremendously," says Lt. Col. Brion Smith, an Army

forensic odontologist. "There are fewer and fewer mysteries left out there."

In Washington, that's becoming increasingly clear. A Pentagon panel is poised to recommend that the Tomb of the Unknowns in Arlington National Cemetery be opened. The reason: its most recently enshrined set of remains may not be unknown. This follows allegations that the identity of the Vietnam War serviceman whose bones lie in the crypt was deliberately withheld by military officials under pressure to consecrate a Vietnam memorial 14 years ago. The controversy has drawn new attention to the rapid advances in forensic science that are making the notion of the "unknown soldier" obsolete. It has also cast a spotlight on Hawaii's Central Identification Laboratory, or "Cilhi" in military speak, ground zero in the Pentagon's effort to provide a full accounting of its war dead.

The strange case of the not-so-unknown soldier began on May 11, 1972, when First Lt. Michael J. Blassie, 24, was shot down in his A-37B Strike aircraft near An Loc, South Vietnam. Blassie's ejector seat, flight suit, wallet and dog tags — along with a handful of bones — were recovered by a South Vietnamese Army patrol five months later. The remains, labeled BTB Blassie, Michael Joseph, were shipped to the laboratory in Hawaii for identification. Tests, however, revealed that the blood type didn't match

Blassie's, and the skeletal fragments appeared to belong to a Caucasian male several years older and taller than the pilot. Perplexed, investigators determined that eight other fliers had crashed in the area during the same battle, but found only one whose characteristics might match those of the remains: Capt. Rodney Strobbridge, 30, whose Cobra went down two miles from the site of Blassie's wreck. But nothing else found with the bones matched Strobbridge. So the remains were relabeled "X-26," meaning identity unknown. In 1984, as President Reagan sought to enshrine a Vietnam unknown, the Pentagon scrambled to find a suitable set of remains for burial. X-26 was their only choice.

Earlier this year, however, a CBS report, following up a story in a veterans' paper, named Blassie as the "unknown" soldier and charged that the Pentagon had engaged in a cover-up. The Pentagon launched a probe that unearthed Strobbridge's name. Officials consulted with Congress and with veterans' groups last week. The panel is expected to tell Defense Secretary William Cohen that opening the crypt is the only way to put the matter to rest. "The primary issue," says Charlie Craigin, the official who oversaw the panel, "is the sanctity of the Tomb [versus] our national commitment for a full accounting of missing in action."

Fulfilling that commitment begins in a one-story stucco building at Hickam Air Force Base outside Honolulu. Since 1976,

its staff of 177 soldiers and civilians has found and identified hundreds of soldiers from World War II, Korea and Southeast Asia. But Vietnam is the lab's most politically sensitive mission. The first expeditions to recover the 2,100 soldiers missing in Southeast Asia were launched a decade ago. In 1992 the Vietnamese government allowed the U.S. military to set up an investigative office in Hanoi. Because of the high speed of Vietnam plane crashes, the searches often yield nothing but a few fistfuls of bone. Even so, the lab has so far identified 494 sets of human remains from Southeast Asia.

Attaching names to even the tiniest bone fragments has grown easier. In 1992 the U.S. military began analyzing remains for mitochondrial DNA, a marker that's shared by all members of a family's maternal lineage. Unlike nucleic DNA, a highly individualized genetic code that is found only in blood and tissue, mitochondrial DNA can remain intact inside bones and teeth for centuries. Forensic anthropologists in Hawaii typically cut away a postage-stamp-size piece of bone or scrape the "pulp," or innermost layer, of a tooth. The sample is then sent to the military's DNA testing center in Rockville, Md. Provided that the DNA-rich calcium hasn't been destroyed by high temperatures — which can occur in fiery plane crashes — a positive ID can often be made in a few weeks. But the case isn't closed until after a complex review process, which takes between six months and two years. "We need to be absolutely sure," says senior anthropologist Robert Mann. Increasingly, they are. Which means that the Pentagon may never find a permanent replacement to fill its soon-to-be-empty crypt.

With JOHN BARRY in Washington

Washington Times

May 5, 1998

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Army chief says he stands by decision on fellow general

Let accused retire while under probe

By Rowan Scarborough
THE WASHINGTON TIMES

Army Gen. Dennis Reimer, in his first public comment on his decision to let a fellow general honorably retire while under investigation, said yesterday he stands by the action.

Gen. Reimer, the Army chief of staff, appeared live on NBC's "To-

day Show" following a taped interview with Donnamaria Carpino. Mrs. Carpino repeated her charges — first reported in The Washington Times — that Maj. Gen. David R. Hale forced her into a sexual relationship in 1997.

Gen. Reimer allowed Gen. Hale to retire in February from his Pentagon post as deputy Army inspector general while the Defense De-

partment inspector general was still investigating Mrs. Carpino's charges.

"I made [the decision] with the knowledge that just because Hale ... goes to retired status, that does not change his status in terms of the Uniform Code of Military Justice jurisdiction," Gen. Reimer said. "I made the case based upon the facts and that knowledge. I stand by that decision."

Legal experts say the Army never has recalled an officer from retirement to active duty for the purpose of punishment.

They also say allowing Gen. Hale to quickly retire appears in conflict with how the Army has pursued criminal cases against lower-ranking enlisted personnel charged with sexual misconduct.

On this point, Gen. Reimer said, "I want to assure you and I want to assure the American people that the Army is firmly committed to make sure that all members of the Army family are treated fairly,

with dignity and respect. . . . We've held people accountable for their actions, regardless of rank. We will continue to do that in this particular case, once the facts are all known."

Mrs. Carpino argues that the Army would have known the facts if it had waited until the inspector general's (IG) investigation was completed before letting Gen. Hale retire.

Asked about Army officials pri-

vately referring to Mrs. Carpino as the one who stalked Gen. Hale, Gen. Reimer said, "I think we've got some information now. I think we need to wait till all the facts come out and see what really the facts on this case really are."

Pentagon IG investigators have completed an initial report and are now trying to get Gen. Hale's response. His military attorney did not return a reporter's phone mes-

sage.

Mrs. Carpino and her Army colonel husband were divorced in November. The colonel served under Gen. Hale in Turkey in 1997, when the general purportedly pressured Mrs. Carpino for sex. She says the general fabricated a story that four officers were prepared to accuse her husband of adultery. The colonel says he never committed adultery.

New York Times

May 5, 1998

Black U.S. Marine Assaulted in Wave of Racism in Moscow

By Michael R. Gordon

MOSCOW -- A black American Marine has been severely beaten by a band of Russian skinheads in a new wave of assaults against foreigners of African and Asian descent.

The attack occurred in daylight on Saturday at Fili Park, a busy area where Russians often buy compact disks, according to Western officials.

The pattern of assaults has become so worrisome that the U.S. Embassy has two times alerted U.S. citizens, particularly those of African or Asian origin, that they may be the subjects of unprovoked attacks. Other embassies have issued similar warnings.

Foreign student groups have complained that the Russian

police have routinely failed to protect them.

Racism is hardly a new problem here. Even though the Soviet Union portrayed itself as a defender of the Third World against a colonialist West, there has been a strong current of racism in Soviet society.

And with many Russians struggling to make ends meet after the collapse of the Soviet Union, Africans, people of the Caucasus and Jews are routinely faulted for the many ills of Russian life.

Before the celebration of the 850th anniversary of Moscow, in September, the city cleared the streets of refugees from Third World countries, according to Human Rights Watch, a nongovernmental organization. Visitors from Central Asia and the Caucasus were also harassed.

Even Alexander Lebed, the retired general and would-be governor of the Siberian territory of Krasnoyarsk, engaged in racial stereotyping when he told a group of voters that Nigerians were responsible for the sale of drugs.

But recently the confrontations have been more ugly -- and more violent.

The latest assaults are the works of neo-Nazi skinheads, or "skinny," as they are called in Russian. Wearing high-top boots, jeans or camouflage pants, the small bands represent a small minority of Russian youth.

The skinheads, however, recently struck fear among foreigners of African and Asian origin when they proclaimed that they would step up their attacks to commemorate Hit-

ler's birthday, on April 20.

At first, the main area of concern was near dormitories where foreign students live near the Russian University of People's Friendship in southwestern Moscow.

Formerly known as Patrice Lumumba University, after the Congolese revolutionary, the university still draws African and other foreign students because of its prestige in the Third World and its low tuition.

But two Asian women were reportedly beaten near Novy Arbat, a main thoroughfare in central Moscow. That prompted the U.S. Embassy to issue its first warning.

Asian and African embassies have also warned their citizens to take special precautions.

Defense Daily

May 5, 1998

Pg. 1

Air Force Could Have Someone Else Pick Depot Winners

By Greg Caires

In an attempt to increase the credibility of the Air Force's depot maintenance competition process on Capitol Hill, Pentagon officials last week told lawmakers that they are willing to consider transferring the Air Force's contract selection authority to an independent entity, according to Sen. Jim Inhofe (R-Okla.).

During an April 30 meeting with Deputy Secretary of State John Hamre and Acting Secretary of the Air Force Whitten Peters, Inhofe said he "gained assurances...that the Pentagon will consider changing the source selection authority" for the ongoing depot maintenance competitions involving the Sacramento Air Logistics Center (ALC), McClellan AFB, Calif., and San Antonio ALC at Kelly AFB, Texas.

"They [Hamre and Peters] said they were committed to considering this option but no follow-up discussions have yet been scheduled," Inhofe spokesman Gary Hoitsma told *Defense Daily* yesterday. "They will, however, have to move quickly if the depot maintenance competitions are to conclude on schedule."

The Air Force is scheduled to select the winners of the McClellan and Kelly competitions by the end of FY '98.

The workload at Sacramento ALC primarily consists of KC-135 tanker maintenance and industrial commodities repair. Bids for the workload are due in to the Air Force by June 19, but so far only a team composed of Boeing [BA] and the Ogden ALC at Hill AFB, Utah, has shown interest in bidding on the Sacramento work. Their proposal, however, would move the KC-135 work to Kelly AFB rather than remain in place at Sacramento, a possibility the Peters/Hamre memo shows interest in avoiding.

The Pentagon's interest in possibly transferring the source selection authority to an independent entity is an attempt to bridge a "credibility gap" the Clinton administration encountered during the past few years through its handling of the Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) process, which some lawmakers believe has been compromised by politics.

For example, during the 1996 presidential election President Clinton pledged his support to keep jobs at McClellan--a move he

repeated at the San Antonio ALC at Kelly AFB--in what critics called an attempt to secure votes in California and Texas.

The issue of the Clinton administration's "politicization" of the Sacramento ALC workload competition resurfaced last week with the leaking of an embarrassing letter from Peters asking Hamre to "encourage" Lockheed Martin [LMT] "to bid to win the work and to perform the work at Sacramento" (*Defense Daily*, May 4).

Despite what lawmakers have been saying about the appropriateness of this request, Hamre maintains that the Pentagon is "fully committed to ensuring full and open competitions...[to] protect military readiness and save precious resources needed for modernization and other programs," according to a statement released Friday.

In addition, Hamre has also written to several key members of Congress to "assure [them] that nothing has changed in any of our planning or activity as it relates to this competition," according to a May 1 letter to Inhofe and other lawmakers. "There have been and will be no changes to the evaluation criteria or to the competition process...."

According to congressional sources, it is too early to tell if Hamre's comments have resolved this issue or whether lawmakers--specifically the House Depot Caucus--will be satisfied by his overtures to bring in an independent source selection authority.

Regardless of whether that independent authority is brought in for the depot maintenance competitions, the Clinton administration could be expected to have difficulties in securing another round of base closures, Hill sources add.

For example, Rep. Saxby Chambliss (R-Ga.)--a long-time critic of how the administration has handled the depot privatization issue--showed his outrage over the Peters letter by publicly stating that "[a]s long as President Clinton sits in the Oval Office, [further] BRAC legislation will be dead."

In addition, Rep. James Hansen (R-Utah) and several other House members wrote House National Security Committee Chairman Floyd Spence (R-S.C.) last week saying that they are "deeply concerned" about the [Clinton] Administration's continuing efforts to evade BRAC law and keep jobs in California." And that this "collusion between the White House, the Deputy Secretary of Defense and the Secretary of the Air Force--who is the ultimate source selection authority for this competition--to favor one contractor, and one location is outrageous, unethical and potentially illegal."

Washington Post

May 5, 1998

Pg. 16

Russia Launches Mammoth Warship

New Cruiser Bristles with Weaponry, But Is the Ship a Cold War Relic?

By David Hoffman
Washington Post
Foreign Service

MOSCOW—One of the largest battle cruisers in the world, the atomic-powered Peter the Great, has finally been delivered to the Russian Navy. But the massive six-deck cruiser, bristling with weapons, has outlived the Cold War conflicts for which it was designed.

The 823-foot-long cruiser is the last of four in its class. They are the largest warships -- except for aircraft carriers -- built by any nation since World War II, according to Arthur D. Baker III, editor of *Combat Fleets of the World*. The first was launched in 1977. But already two of the four giant vessels are out of service, and experts say the newest arrival is not likely to be on the high seas anytime soon.

Indeed, at a time when the Russian navy is so strapped for cash that it must retire ballistic missile submarines early for lack of maintenance, and when Russia's shipyard workers and sailors are routinely paid months late, the Peter the Great stands out.

When the keel was laid 12 years ago, Mikhail Gorbachev was leader of the Soviet Union and the ship was named the Yuri Andropov, after the late Soviet leader and KGB boss. Many predicted it would never be finished, and it languished for years at a St. Petersburg shipyard. President Boris Yeltsin changed the name in 1992.

Russia scraped together enough money to bring it close to completion, and the ship was formally commissioned at a ceremony April 18 at the headquarters of the Northern Fleet in Severomorsk. Hoisted above was the flag bearing the St. Andrew Cross, a symbol dating back to Russia's sea-loving czar, Peter the Great.

Andrei Kokoshin, secretary of the Russian security council, declared, "I can see that our fleet is alive and getting on its feet again, albeit in a hard and tortuous process."

Adm. Igor Kasatonov, deputy navy commander, told the Interfax news service, "The Peter the Great is a 21st-century ship with immense potential."

But many analysts consider the ship a huge white elephant

with no real purpose. Russia can neither afford it, nor needs such a giant warship. The emphasis today is not on mammoth vessels but rather on building smaller, more versatile ships, analysts said.

The ship was designed in the 1970s when the Soviet Union's military planners wanted to be prepared for a global conflict; the missile-laden ship was intended to be an aircraft-carrier killer in the Pacific.

However, today, the Russian military is shrinking rapidly for lack of money, and costly global military missions are out of the question. Analysts said the Peter the Great will never make it to the Pacific Fleet; there is speculation that the navy may eventually have to close the Pacific Fleet and merge it with the Northern Fleet, keeping only one fleet in the north. According to Baker, the Pacific Fleet does not even have facilities for maintenance of the massive ship, or refueling its twin nuclear reactors.

Russia has adopted a national security doctrine that says it will rely on its nuclear deterrent forces for the foresee-

able future, while struggling to consolidate and rebuild weakened conventional troops. In practice, this has meant that some military units, such as those in East Asia, are being assigned missions to protect strategic nuclear forces, such as submarine bases.

Even if it never sails, the Peter the Great's commissioning provided a little symbolic uplift for a country that was once a global naval superpower, but today is struggling to retain a semblance of its former influence. "I think they wanted a symbol of Russian naval power," said Dmitri Trenin, a military analyst at the Moscow center of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. "I think that's why they decided to concentrate resources in completing it when so many others were left rusting away."

He said the ship might be useful in helping to protect northern naval bases, where much of Russia's strategic nuclear deterrent is based on submarines.

Other navy officials have been quoted as saying the Peter the Great may be used for

training, but could never be used in combat, because Russia lacks the proper escort ships; without an escort it would be just a huge sitting duck.

The ship's construction was plagued with delays, and once it finally got to Baltic Sea trials in 1996, a steam line burst, killing four sailors. While it was on that maiden voyage, a Swedish fighter jet tried to photograph it but crashed just 200 yards away, killing the pilot.

The cost of the ship is not known but some informal estimates are about \$1 billion.

The ship carries 20 SS-N-19 anti-ship missiles in four rows of five tubes angled inside the hull. It also carries a phalanx of other armament and electronics. It has a crew of 610 including 82 commissioned officers and midshipmen. The boat also boasts a special presidential cabin for Yeltsin. He has visited once.

European Stars &
Stripes
May 5, 1998
Pg. 5

Croatian Official Dies

ZAGREB, Croatia -- Gojko Susak, the hard-line defense minister and closest ally of President Franjo Tudjman, has died, the state-run HINA news agency reported. He was 53.

A tough nationalist who devoted his life to creating and preserving Croatia's independence, Susak also became a useful ally of the United States as it sought to end the Bosnian war.

HINA said Susak died Sunday night. It did not immediately give the cause of death. But Susak had been treated for lung cancer in 1995 at the Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington, and underwent surgery at Massachusetts General Hospital in Boston in 1997.

As defense minister since 1991, Susak led Croatia's fight against the Serbian rebellion that temporarily left a third of Croatia in Serbian hands before the 1995 Croatian army offensive that defeated the rebels.

Russia Files Complaint in Sub Incident

Washington Post
Foreign Service

MOSCOW—Russia has complained to the United States about a mysterious submarine incident that occurred last December as the Russian navy was destroying ballistic missiles under the START-I treaty in the Barents Sea.

On Dec. 3 and 4, a submerged Russian Typhoon submarine launched 20 intercontinental ballistic missiles as part of a destruction routine under the arms control treaty. The missiles, which did not carry nuclear warheads, were blown up about 30 seconds after launch at an altitude of about

two miles, Russian officials said.

The Russians had announced the planned destruction, which is unusual; missiles are usually taken apart and cut up. Russian officials said the explosion method would be cheaper.

The Russians said the destruction was observed by seven U.S. inspectors aboard an anchored hydrographic vessel.

But the Russians complained to the U.S. Embassy here that another submerged submarine appeared on the scene. They say it was an

American Los-Angeles class submarine, apparently gathering data about the launches.

A senior Russian navy official said the visiting sub was within four miles of the Typhoon. A Russian vessel signaled the submarine to get out of the way. It did not respond. After that, a helicopter dropped depth charges which were detonated, and the sub left, the official said.

The U.S. Navy refused comment. But officials indicated that the submarine was not American. The Russian officials said they were sure it was a U.S. submarine.

Fighting Rages on In Kosovo

Albania Warns Of Full-Scale War

Washington Post

May 5, 1998

Pg. 17

Reuters

JUNIK, Yugoslavia, May 4—Fighting raged for a second day in Kosovo today as a senior official from neighboring Albania warned that full-scale war could erupt in the restive Serbian province.

Serbian police said they had encircled up to 200 ethnic Albanian separatist guerrillas in Ponoševac after the Kosovo Liberation Army attacked police in the southwest Kosovo village Sunday.

Gun and mortar fire rang out around Ponoševac, about six miles east of the Albanian border. Serbian officials said the guerrillas were trying to establish a no-go zone along the border, which is marked by towering, snow-capped mountains.

Reporters who reached the

nearby village of Junik were turned back by Serbian police who said Albanian "terrorists" were firing on any vehicle trying to reach Ponoševac.

"There are many dead and wounded [ethnic Albanians] in the Ponoševac area but we have no way to reach them because the terrorists are shooting at everything and everybody," a Serbian police officer said at a checkpoint near Junik.

Serbia, which is the dominant province of Yugoslavia, abolished Kosovo's autonomy in 1989, prompting Kosovo's ethnic Albanians to set up their own parallel institutions. About 90 percent of the province's 2 million people are ethnic Albanians. About 150 people have been killed since February in clashes between Albanian separatists and Serbian forces.

In an interview published today, Albanian Foreign Minister Paskal Milo warned that

war could easily break out in Kosovo. "It is the first time in 50 years that we have such tension on our border with Serbia," Milo told the Athens-based Vradyni newspaper. "It is first time the Kosovo Albanians are so determined and organized to claim their rights and take this matter to the end."

Albania has put its armed forces on alert along its border with Kosovo. A government official said the Tirana government planned to create a civilian volunteer force to curb arms trafficking and help refugees in areas bordering the southern Serbian province.

The Democratic League of Kosovo, which advocates independence by nonviolent means, said the fighting around Ponoševac was an effort by Serbian police to clear ethnic Albanians from the strategic border area.

29 Nations Join Exercise

European Stars & Stripes

May 5, 1998

Pg. 3

SEMBACH AB, Germany (S&S)—Twenty nine European nations will join in what is being described as the most extensive multinational communications event ever conducted, starting next week at Sembach Air Base.

It is the fourth annual Combined Endeavor communications and interoperability

exercise, and is sponsored by the U.S. European Command in cooperation with the German Defense Ministry.

The exercise, which runs from Thursday to May 21, will test the 29 nations' abilities to find technical solutions for communications among several armed services and different nations—a situation that in-

creasingly characterizes the operations in Europe, a EU-COM press release said.

Each day's testing ends in a wide range of sporting events for the 400 participants, "which serve to build esprit de corps and camaraderie," the statement said.

Washington Times

May 5, 1998

Pg. 15

Cyprus envoy throws up hands

Holbrooke leaves, blames the Turks

By Andrew Borowiec
THE WASHINGTON TIMES

NICOSIA, Cyprus — U.S. envoy Richard Holbrooke left Cyprus yesterday blaming Turkish Cypriot intransigence for his failure to restart U.S.-sponsored talks on reunifying the Mediterranean island.

Mr. Holbrooke, who successfully resolved the Bosnian conflict in Dayton, Ohio, three years ago, tried to play down his failure in Cyprus as "not a crisis or a catastrophe" and said he would return "if it is useful."

But he blamed Turkish Cypriot

leader Rauf Denktash's insistence on recognition of his breakaway state as a condition for resuming negotiations as well as his demand that the European Union's membership talks with Cyprus be cancelled on account of the deadlock.

"This stand will make progress difficult," Mr. Holbrooke told reporters before leaving Cyprus. Those conditions, he said, mean "a meaningful exchange is not possible."

Mr. Holbrooke also said there was no progress on the issue of the Greek Cypriots' decision to deploy Russian-made S-300 anti-aircraft missiles this summer.

Turkey has threatened to take action to prevent the deployment. Greece, in turn, warned that it would defend Cyprus, raising fears of a military clash between the two NATO countries.

Mr. Denktash, in comments yesterday after Mr. Holbrooke's visit, blamed the failure on Greek Cypriots and their insistence both on EU accession as well as the S-300 anti-aircraft missile deployment.

"During these meetings we have shown good will," he said. "If there has not been any progress despite the efforts of our friend, Mr. Holbrook, the reason for this is the above mentioned attitude of the Greek Cypriot/Greek side and their approach which has restricted Holbrooke's initiative."

During his visit, Mr. Holbrooke crossed the U.N. buffer zone that divides the island several times for separate meetings with Mr. Denktash and President Glafcos Clerides, the Greek Cypriot leader.

Mr. Clerides said he was disappointed that Mr. Holbrooke was not harder on both Mr. Denktash and the Turkish government for making "illogical demands."

Mr. Denktash's state is recognized only by Turkey, which maintains 35,000 troops there.

Turkish Cypriots do not want Cyprus to join the EU before Turkey does.

Mr. Holbrooke said upon his arrival Friday that Mr. Denktash's demand for recognition was unacceptable to the United States and the United Nations.

Mr. Holbrooke insisted that "there is a solution to the Cyprus problem, but it is the responsibility of both sides. . . . We cannot impose a solution, the two sides must want it."

Before leaving the island, Mr. Holbrooke said that Tom Miller, the State Department's Cyprus coordinator, would be returning to Nicosia toward the end of May. Diplomats described the planned visit as part of the U.S. effort to keep the talks going, regardless of repeated failures.

• This article is based in part on wire service reports.

Baltimore Sun

May 5, 1998

Pg. 17

U.S. compiling criminal files on Hussein

Information would be used in event of war crimes trial

FROM WIRE REPORTS

KUWAIT — The United States said yesterday that it was compiling files to prove the "criminal conduct" of Saddam Hussein, in case the Iraqi president is tried before an international court one day.

"We are working closely with the Kuwaiti government to bring together documentary records of Saddam Hussein's regime with respect to crimes," said David Scheffer, the U.S. ambassador at large for war crimes.

"It is important that the pattern of Saddam Hussein's conduct be extremely well known to the international community," Scheffer said, adding that this conduct "continues to be a threat to international peace and security."

Scheffer, in Kuwait on a three-day visit to discuss the documentation of crimes with Kuwaiti officials, said a trial would not happen soon because there was no established court to hold it in.

The U.S. Senate approved a nonbinding resolution in March branding Hussein a war criminal and calling for his indictment by an international tribunal to be set up under the United Nations.

Baghdad's use of chemical weapons against Kurds in Iraq 10 years ago and during the 1980-1988 Iran-Iraq war, the firing of missiles against Israeli noncombatants during the 1991 Persian Gulf war and an attempt to assassinate former President George Bush in 1993 were listed among the charges that could be brought.

While the five permanent members of the U.N. Security Council back the idea of an international criminal court to hear cases against individuals accused of war crimes and genocide, they are divided over how it should work.

Scheffer said it was premature to discuss any plans to put Hussein on trial but added that "the way to get there is to show an impressive compilation of information about the Iraqi regime."

Scheffer's post was created last year to seek accountability for serious violations of international humanitarian law.

Washington Times
May 5, 1998 Pg. 17

Iraq threatens fight over U.N. sanctions

BAGHDAD — Iraq, saying its patience was wearing thin after nearly eight years of punitive U.N. sanctions, warned the Security Council yesterday that it would not wait much longer for the United Nations to lift its trade embargo.

Iraqi Vice President Taha Yas-

sin Ramadan said if the Security Council did not react positively to an open letter to the panel's chairman and its members by Friday, Baghdad was ready to fight until the sanctions were lifted.

"The age of this letter is not years or months. It has a limited time," Mr. Ramadan said at the closing session of a conference of Arab politicians and dignitaries in Baghdad.

"Either we accept to die slowly

or we fight in order to lift the embargo," Mr. Ramadan said. He did not spell out in what way Iraq would fight for the lifting of the sanctions.

San Antonio Express News

May 4, 1998

AF Memo May Skew Boeing Role In S.A.

By Gary Martin
Express-News
Washington Bureau

WASHINGTON -- Efforts by the Clinton administration to keep repair of the Air Force KC-135 tanker aircraft in Sacramento, Calif., could threaten a Boeing Co. plan to bring \$100 million of that work to San Antonio.

A leaked memorandum from acting Air Force Secretary Whitten Peters outlines the White House's interest in keeping KC-135 repair in California, despite a "surprise low bid" by Boeing to move a portion of the work to facilities at the closing Kelly AFB depot.

The repair currently is done at the McClellan AFB depot, which, like the Kelly center, was ordered closed in 2001 by the 1995 base closure commission. The two depots are being turned over to their respective cities for redevelopment.

"It is my concern that Sacramento is trying to drive too hard a deal here," Whitten wrote to Deputy Defense Secretary John Hamre.

"Indeed, the rumor is that Boeing lost interest in Sacramento because the local redevelopment authority and the state of California were not willing to make concessions and Texas and San Antonio were," Whitten wrote in the memo.

Whitten said John Podesta, White House deputy chief of staff, is urging the Pentagon to encourage Lockheed Martin Corp. "to bid to win the work" and "perform the work at Sacramento."

The memo raised the ire of lawmakers with other Air Force repair depots trying to secure work from the closing Kelly and McClellan facilities for their installations.

The "Depot Caucus" lawmakers have charged the memo

is a "smoking gun" that shows the White House politicization of the base closure process.

"It shows direct involvement of the White House in the bidding process," said retired Lt. Gen. Dick Burpee, director of aviation and aerospace development for the Greater Oklahoma City Chamber of Commerce.

"If I were San Antonio, working with Boeing, I would not be very happy about that memo," Burpee said.

Rep. James Hansen, R-Utah, penned a letter signed by the Depot Caucus seeking a congressional hearing into the "collusion" between the White House and Pentagon in the Air Force bidding process.

But Rep. Ciro Rodriguez, D-San Antonio, said the memo merely outlines the desire by the White House and Pentagon to have another competitive bid in the process, and doesn't preclude Boeing from winning the work.

"If Boeing is left out, then we have something to be concerned about," said Rodriguez, a member of the House National Security Committee.

Sen. Kay Bailey Hutchison, R-Texas, was in Bosnia and couldn't be reached for comment.

Paul Guse, a Boeing spokesman in St. Louis, downplayed the importance of the memo, saying his firm was preparing its bid to win the work and responding to questions from the Air Force about the proposal.

"The proposal is out on the street, and we have our hands full just to respond to that," Guse said.

The Air Force has asked private defense firms to submit bids on the KC-135 work at Sacramento by June 19. Boeing is teaming with the Air Force depot at Hill AFB in Utah.

If Boeing is successful, the

\$200 million workload will be split up, with electronic and other commodity repair going to Utah and roughly half the remaining workload shipped to San Antonio, Guse said.

Boeing signed a 20-year lease in April with the city of San Antonio for use of Kelly facilities for various aircraft maintenance programs it hopes to locate in Texas.

The number of San Antonio jobs created by the KC-135 workload was still being calculated, but Guse said winning that work was a significant component of Boeing's plans for its Kelly center repairs, which is expected to employ 300 workers by the end of this year and 800 workers within 18 months.

Meanwhile, Lockheed has expressed interest in bidding for the KC-135 work at McClellan, with an option of performing at least a portion of the repairs at its plant in Greenville, S.C.

As the bidding process moves forward, the Depot Caucus is seeking authority to subpoena all documents, memos and communications on the closing of McClellan for its yet-to-be scheduled congressional hearing.

At the very least, members of the caucus charged that continued efforts by the Clinton administration to politicize the base closure process make Defense Secretary William Cohen's call for two more rounds of closings a tough sell in Congress.

Business Week
May 11, 1998

Uncle Sam Recuts The R&D Pie

The 21st Century could start with a bang for research and development. For the first time in 60 years, civilian R&D could overtake defense technology in Washington's spending priorities. Crossover should occur in fiscal 2000, and by 2003, non-defense research could grab 53% of the federal R&D budget, according to the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS).

Other industrialized countries have long plowed most of their public R&D funds into nondefense work. And competitiveness gurus have been urging the U.S. to follow suit. Adding fuel to the fire, a 1997 study by Chi Research Inc. in Haddon Heights, N.J., turned up strong new evidence that tax-supported research, especially at universities, is crucial to industrial technology.

The AAAS study, which was prompted by the sizable R&D boosts in President Clinton's proposed 1999 budget, does raise some warning flags, though. Most new nondefense funding would go to health and biomedical research. But breakthroughs there often stem from advances in the physical sciences and mathematics--disciplines not slated for big increases. Also, much of the new money would come from tobacco-settlement funds, which are still problematic, politically.

--Edited By Otis Port

Austin American-Statesman

May 4, 1998

Military health system ailing, personnel testify

By Jeff Nesmith
American-Statesman
Washington Staff

WASHINGTON -- Barbara Glacel, the wife of an Army officer at Fort Hood, thinks her recovery from breast cancer is being impeded by the stress of having to cope with the Defense Department's new managed-care health insurance program, known as Tricare.

Repeated paperwork mistakes, computer glitches that take months to fix, a bewildering organization and the need to constantly get new authorization for doctor-ordered therapy are wearing her down, she says.

"Access to care is so difficult to attain that quality of care suffers," Glacel told a House subcommittee last week in Washington. "Once the provider is reached, the care is usually great. The providers don't like the system any better than the patients do."

Glacel is not a typical user of military health care. With a doctorate in political science, she knows how to deal with complex organizations, and she is married to a brigadier general stationed at Fort Hood, near Killeen.

Yet critics of Tricare say her experiences are typical of problems that hundreds of military dependents, retirees and retirees' dependents are having with the program set up to manage much of the vast military health-care system.

Last week, the Tricare managed-care program went into effect in 11 more states; it already is in place in Texas.

Several bills have been introduced in Congress to allow some or all civilian patients of the military medical system to opt out of Tricare and switch to the Federal Employees Health Benefits Plan, the health-care plan for civil service employees of the federal government, political appointees, members of Congress and government retirees.

The bills would require the Defense Department to pay the

same portion of the plan's premiums that the government now pays for civilian employees and retirees. That would cost up to \$1 billion a year, Defense Department officials say, and could lead to dismantling the military health-care system.

But military health-care consumers, convinced FEHBP would be an improvement, say they are being treated like second-class citizens by being forced to rely on Tricare.

Gary Christopherson, the newly named acting assistant secretary of defense for health affairs, told the House Government Reform and Oversight subcommittee last week that Tricare expands the access to care for the country's active-duty and retired military communities.

"Barbara Glacel's case is appalling, and I personally apologize for it," Christopherson said after hearing her testify at the hearing.

He acknowledged unhappiness with many areas of Tricare and said "lessons learned are being applied." Still, he defended the new system.

"The Tricare system offers expanded access to care, a choice of health-care options, consistent high-quality benefits and reduced health-care costs for beneficiaries and taxpayers alike," Christopherson said.

In her testimony before the committee, Glacel said her breast cancer was discovered in December 1996 when she lived in Brussels, Belgium, where her husband was stationed. She underwent a mastectomy on Jan. 21, 1997.

Seven months later, they moved to Fort Hood, and her battles with Tricare began. Although an orthopedic surgeon had said she would need regular physical therapy for at least a year to regain full use of a shoulder left immobile by her surgery, guidelines used by Foundation Health Federal Services Inc., the Tricare contractor in Texas, call for no more than 20 sessions of physical therapy a year.

Officials threatened to discontinue the therapy altogether, she said.

A surgeon told her she might need an operation on her shoulder, but the operation

could not be performed without more physical therapy. But Foundation decreased her authorization for the therapy. Her husband, Brig. Gen. Bob Glacel, started trying to give her the therapy at home.

She said paperwork constantly was being rejected. Differing military, medical and contractor jargon confused the paperwork processing and caused delays. For example, ASAP in one organization's language is stat (at once) in another's, and "within three days" in another's.

Calls to a Tricare consumer toll-free number were not answered, she said. Sometimes a recording told her to call back later. Clerks were ill-trained and sometimes rude. One supervisor yelled at her and called her a liar in a dispute over whether she had followed the right paperwork procedures.

"I have had excellent care from military doctors," Glacel said. "My beef is with the contractor who runs Tricare in our region and with the policies which govern access to care."

"Four-year nightmare"

Retired Master Sgt. Boyd Simmons, now of San Antonio, also appeared before the House subcommittee. He described his efforts to get treatment for his brain-cancer-stricken wife through Eisenhower Army Medical Center at Fort Gordon, Ga., as a "four-year nightmare."

Simmons, whose 20-year career in the Army included two tours in Vietnam, testified that when he took his wife, Lucy, to the emergency room in 1994, bleeding from the nose and an ear, he was told by a physician's assistant that she had sinusitis and that he should take her home. His requests for further tests were denied.

However, when the physician's assistant was unable to awaken Lucy Simmons in the emergency room, a CT scan was ordered. It revealed a large brain tumor that had burst.

She was transferred to a Department of Veterans Affairs hospital for surgery in a cooperative arrangement among the Army, the VA and the Medical College of Georgia.

In 1996, after Simmons was

told by VA hospital officials his wife had fully recovered with no remaining traces of tumor, a Medical College surgical resident requested a follow-up scan of her brain before she was discharged from the VA hospital. This procedure revealed another tumor.

"We were told it was small, not an emergency," Simmons testified. "Weeks went by, and I was told there was a problem with coordination of the surgery between all departments involved. Meanwhile, Lucy started having nosebleeds."

She eventually got the surgery she needed. But six months later, Lucy Simmons had trouble breathing and began to run a high fever. Boyd Simmons said he took her to the VA emergency room and was told that because she was not a veteran, she could not be treated there. He said he refused to leave, and hospital officials called the county sheriff's office to have him arrested for trespassing. He said he asked hospital workers to call an ambulance to take his wife to Eisenhower Medical Center, but they refused.

During his wife's illness, Simmons said, he sold his business in Augusta, Ga., in order to take care of her. A few weeks ago, they sold their home in Augusta and moved into a motor home. They now live in San Antonio, where he was able to get a civilian job at the Army's Fort Sam Houston.

The civilian job entitles him and his wife to coverage under FEHBP, he said.

Newport News Daily
Press May 4, 1998

Atlantic Command At Helm Of Future

By William H. McMichael
Daily Press

It's beginning to look like U.S. Atlantic Command will be the organization that will play the central role in determining the future size and shape of the U.S. military, after all.

Atlantic Command already oversees joint training of the U.S. military - multi-service training exercises that test whether today's forces can op-

erate together and are ready to go to war. If it gains the additional responsibility - a move that has won support inside the Pentagon - Navy Adm. Harold W. Gehman Jr.'s Norfolk-based Atlantic command would direct and evaluate all experiments aimed at shaping the future military.

As recently as December, a study commissioned by Congress suggested splitting Atlantic Command's responsibilities among two new organizations - and abolishing the command.

But congressional and military sources say that key legislators, after meetings with Gehman and Gen. Hugh Shelton, the Joint Chiefs of Staff chairman, have decided against such a move. Instead, the legislators, who are convinced that joint operations are the wave of the future, are crafting a bill that would direct the Pentagon to fully fund joint military experiments and require an annual accounting of the results.

The actual legislation will simply insist that the Pentagon find a way to study future military operations under one

roof, and to give that commander "the mission, the responsibility, the resources, and authority over those resources... and to report back to us on the results," said a Senate staffer familiar with the issue.

Atlantic Command, he said, would also be "looking at alternative methods of operation - perhaps alternative organizations than we have today."

Shelton favors giving the responsibility to Atlantic Command; privately, the legislators favor Shelton's plan.

"The finger, to me, appears to be pointing to Atlantic Command," the Senate staffer said.

Sens. Dan Coats, R-Ind., and Joseph I. Lieberman, D-Conn., are major boosters of joint military experimentation. Both are members of the Senate's Committee on Armed Services, which along with the House National Security Committee oversees the military and crafts its annual budgets.

"Senator Lieberman believes strongly that the next step in transforming our mili-

tary into that which will protect our nation into the 21st century is to institute a vigorous program of joint experimentation," said Fred Downey, Lieberman's military adviser. "We'll continue to work very closely with the Pentagon as the plan to execute that evolves."

The two senators originally favored forming an entirely new organization to oversee joint experimentation, as recommended in the December 1997 report by the congressionally appointed National Defense Panel.

But that same month, Shelton moved to strengthen Atlantic Command by assigning it responsibility for five diverse military think tanks that study various aspects of joint operations. Two of those are local: Fort Monroe's Joint Warfighting Center and the Joint Battle Center in Suffolk. Another, the Joint Warfighting Analysis Center, is in Dahlgren, Va.

After several meetings with Shelton, the two senators changed their minds.

The individual services are conducting their own ex-

periments with future operations and organizational structures: The Army's Force 21, the Marines' Sea Dragon, the Navy's Network-centric Warfare, the Air Force's Expeditionary Force Experiment. The staffer said the proposed legislation would analyze and build upon, not take away from, these efforts.

"The idea is coherent joint operations," said one defense official. "Ideally, you have a joint task force commander, and you give him all the tools he needs to do the job, and he knows exactly what to do with all of them. Well, we're not always there yet."

The idea also is to go well beyond current efforts to meld service operations, the Senate staffer said.

"Back in the 1920s, the Navy began experimenting with putting airplanes on ships," he said. "But they didn't have any aircraft carriers. So they took an oiler and put a flat deck on it and did exercises on that. That's a rough analogy to what we're talking about here."

St. Louis Post-Dispatch

May 3, 1998

Pg. 1

Army May Burn Nerve-Gas Waste At Sauget Facility

EPA Permit Is Sought To Ship Material From Remote Pacific Island; Public Hearing Was Held In Hawaii

By Bill Lambrecht
Post-Dispatch
Washington Bureau

WASHINGTON--If the Army gets its way, hazardous wastes with traces of World War II-era nerve gas soon will be loaded on barges at Johnston Island in the Pacific and launched on a 6,000-mile journey to an incinerator in Sauget.

The wastes, including arsenic, mercury and a soup of heavy metals, are a byproduct of phasing out the nation's chemical weapons storehouse and closing an island outpost that has outlived its usefulness.

Last month, the Army asked the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency in San Francisco for emergency authority to begin preparing the materials for shipping. They would travel by barge to Honolulu, from there by container ship to Long Beach, Calif., and then by rail to the Midwest. The Army says that Trade Waste Incineration

in Sauget is the final destination.

But Tom Bramlette, Trade Waste's general manager said last week that the final decision on Sauget has not been made and that his company may choose another of its incinerators. "It may or may not come to Sauget," he said.

The question is not whether the shipments will be sent, but when. EPA approval is needed only for transferring the wastes to new containers, not for the shipments. The Army wants that approval as quickly as possible.

The shipments are classified as hazardous because of the heavy metals, which can cause damage to the nervous system, and other problems, if improperly handled. But even with the nerve agent remnants, the shipments are no more hazardous than others moving routinely in the St. Louis region, experts said.

Army officials say they are proceeding with a difficult chore ordered by Congress as swiftly and as cheaply as possible.

"This is just one more of those things that we have to get rid of and get done so that we can safely close Johnston Island," said Major Eric Dietz, an engineer in the Army's chemical demilitarization program. Yet the proposal raises questions:

* Why is the Army spending \$2 million to ship hazardous wastes from an uninhabited island to the populous Midwest?

* Why not destroy the materials on the island in the Army's \$200 million incinerator, which burns hot enough to handle chemical weapons?

* Why did the Army hold a public hearing to explain the plan in Honolulu on April 21 rather than in Sauget or elsewhere in the continental United

States?

Craig Williams of the Kentucky-based Chemical Weapons Working Group said the Army should be sensitive when considering shipments of toxicants to communities with low-income or heavily minority populations.

Sauget, an industrial area with a population of 195, sits next door to predominately African-American East St. Louis.

"We think the people in and around Sauget have a right to know that this is coming, precisely what it is and then take part in the decision-making process," Williams said.

Wartime waste worries

Disposing of outmoded weapons and munitions, trash is not as routine as it once was now that threats of war seem remote.

The Navy discovered as much trying to ship the coun-

try's storehouse of napalm from California to the Midwest this spring for destruction in waste-burning kilns. The first rail car containing 12,000 gallons made it as far as Kansas City before a public outcry in the Chicago area left it without a home.

The train turned around and now sits at China Lake Naval Air Weapons Station near Los Angeles as the Navy ponders a new plan.

What the Army is handling out in the Pacific is more worrisome than napalm.

Johnston Island, 850 miles southwest of Hawaii, is where the Army brought rockets, bombs and the rest of its chemical munitions stockpile from Okinawa in 1971 after the Japanese demanded their removal. Congress ordered the phasing out of chemical weapons in 1985, and the Army is trying to reach that goal.

The Army stores these wastes in 250 oversize metal drums stacked within a stone's throw of the Pacific Ocean. They are deteriorating, a reason the Army wants to hasten disposal. Sooner or later, the wastes will be transferred to about 10 6,000-gallon steel containers for their journey.

Most of the liquid waste is

decontamination solution likened by the Army to bleach and baking soda. Tests show that about half of the drums contain these heavy metals:

- * Arsenic in concentrations as high as 7,800 parts per million.

- * Mercury as high as 427 ppm.

- * Lesser concentrations of lead, chromium and cadmium.

The levels of nerve agents such as sarin, VX and mustard gas were recorded in seven of the 250 drums in far smaller amounts - below 200 parts per billion.

"It's basically salt water," said Gary Hlavsa, an Army chemical weapons expert.

To handle the disposal, the Army hired UXB International of Virginia, which subcontracted with the company that operates Trade Wastes Incineration and other facilities.

EPA spokeswoman Lois Grunwald said that her office in San Francisco is deciding whether to grant the Army's request to cut short a public comment period that is scheduled to run until June.

"The Army has told us that they feel there's an immediate threat there, and we've asked them to show us what that threat is," she said, referring to

the deteriorating drums.

Shipments are defended

A dozen people showed up two weeks ago in Honolulu for a public hearing required in the Army's permit request. When asked why Hawaii rather than Sauget, Army spokeswoman Marilyn Tischbin said that Honolulu was the closest community.

Money figures prominently in the decision to ship materials far away rather than dispose of them at Johnston Island. Starting the shipments immediately would save \$250,000 - a reason for the emergency request, Army officials said.

Why not burn the wastes at home? The Army's four-furnace incinerator stokes up to 2,700 degrees and is sophisticated enough to destroy deadly nerve gas. But, Army officials said, it is expensive to operate and does not have a federal permit to handle heavy metals. Getting that permit, which would require trial burns, could cost \$10 million - five times the \$2 million cost to haul it away, the Army says.

Spokeswoman Tischbin put it this way: "Basically, we were looking for the best firm that can do the job with value to the

government."

Sauget's Trade Waste Incineration apparently can do the job, even though the company has run afoul of regulations in the past and has an enforcement action pending.

In 1995, the company was ordered to pay \$850,000 for violations that included storing wastes without proper permits and emitting too much air pollution. As part of the consent order, the company agreed to give East St. Louis \$200,000 for trash cleanup.

In 1991, the company agreed to an even larger penalty - \$1.9 million - for infractions that included causing an airborne plume of contaminants by improperly mixing wastes.

Even skeptics of the Army's plan see no ideal solution on the island that many people still call Kalama, Johnston's name before it became a U.S. territory. Some are happy to see the waste go; others, like Hawaiian Nancy Aleck, worry about its passage in waters roiled by storms, and the fairness of sending it elsewhere.

"Maybe," Aleck said, "from now on we shouldn't be creating these weapons until we've figured out what to do with them and these wastes down the line."

Philadelphia Inquirer

May 5, 1998

Pg. 1

New Jersey will dock in Bayonne, not Camden

By Scott Fallon

INQUIRER CORRESPONDENT

The USS New Jersey will not be calling Camden home.

The most decorated warship in naval history, launched from the Philadelphia Naval Shipyard into the Delaware River 56 years ago, will be docked on the Hudson River off Bayonne and made into a museum. Gov. Whitman's office said yesterday.

For the last few months, the ship has been locked in a tug of war between South Jersey legislators, who feverishly pushed for the Camden waterfront location, and a state commission that wants the New Jersey on the Hudson.

"I'm willing to live with the commission's determination," said Whitman, through a spokeswoman. "They've done a lot of hard work to raise funds to get it here. So basically it's going to Bayonne."

Many South Jersey officials felt

cheated by the governor's decision.

"We were never given the opportunity to make our case for the ship," said State Sen. John Matheussen, who along with Camden Mayor Milton Milan has been lobbying to bring the ship to South Jersey since the fall. "If we were at least considered, then I would still be disappointed with the decision. But we were totally dismissed when it came to this."

Matheussen and Milan have sent letters to every municipality and freeholder board in Camden, Gloucester, Burlington, Cape May, Cumberland, Salem and Atlantic counties asking to support the docking of the 887-foot ship off Camden's waterfront.

"They wanted to unravel 18 years of work," said Gordon Bishop, director of fund-raising for the Battleship New Jersey Foundation. "Their efforts were too late. It's a done

deal."

The Battleship New Jersey Commission, which has been calling for the ship's return since 1980, has maintained that Bayonne's Military Ocean Terminal is the best site for the battleship due to its proximity to New York City. Commission members have said that the Camden location would not be able to draw enough tourists from the Philadelphia region.

In January, the state Senate and Assembly passed resolutions to dock the battleship on the Hudson.

The New Jersey, one of four original Iowa-class battleships, served in World War II during the assaults on Iwo Jima and Okinawa, and in the Korean and Vietnam wars. It was last decommissioned in 1991 off the coast of Washington state.

State officials have said that it would take \$1.2 million just to tow the ship from Washington to New

Jersey. An additional \$6 million would be needed to restore the ship. Organizers have raised about \$3 million so far through a combination of state appropriations, income-tax checkoffs, the sale of commemorative license plates, and other fundraising efforts.

Last week, U.S. Sen. John Warner (R. Va.), chairman of the Armed Services Subcommittee on Seapower, agreed to substitute the USS Iowa for the New Jersey on the Naval registry in his review of the De-

fense Authorization bill. Under federal law, there must be two Iowa-class battleships that are available to the Navy at any time.

The bill will be presented to the subcommittee today, and is expected to come before the full Armed Services Committee tomorrow. It will then have to be approved by both the House of Representatives and the Senate, which may take months.

U.S. Sen. Robert Torricelli (D. N.J.), who has publicly supported

Camden's bid for the ship, last week said he would support whatever decision Whitman made.

Matheussen said yesterday that he would like to get more South Jersey representatives on the commission when five seats open on the 14-member panel in the next few months.

"There are no members at all from below Princeton," he said. "We need all of New Jersey represented on the commission. I'm not taking a back seat to this."

Philadelphia Inquirer

May 5, 1998

Pg. B2

Guardsmen still critical after lightning accident

By Juan C. Rodriguez
INQUIRER CORRESPONDENT

Two New Jersey National Guardsmen remained in critical condition and a third soldier's condition improved yesterday at St. Barnabas Medical Center in Livingston, one day after a lightning bolt struck their campsite in Fort Dix before dawn.

One guardsman was killed and three others suffered minor injuries when an electrical current passed through their tents while they were sleeping. All of the men were members of an 80-person National Guard unit based out of Lawrence, N.J., that was completing a weekend of artillery training.

National Guard officials said there are no plans to change weekend training at Fort Dix.

Pfc. Jose Santiago, 34, of Trenton, is expected to be released from the hospital today. His condition improved from critical condition to stable and he was moved to another part of the intensive care unit called a "step down."

While Santiago refused to discuss the incident, he described the experience simply as "shocking" in a brief telephone interview yesterday.

Pvt. Barry Johnson, 37, of Trenton, and Spec. Matthew Scheper, of Somerset, continued to be treated in

the intensive care unit for several small burns on their bodies yesterday, said Lt. Col. John Dwyer, spokesman for the New Jersey National Guard. They are also being examined for neurological damage, Dwyer said.

One guardsman, Spec. Kenyon Hodges, 22, of Trenton, died shortly after arriving at Community Medical Center in Toms River.

As a cannoneer, Hodges was in charge of loading ammunition into Howitzer cannons and positioning the gun for firing. He worked with the National Guard since February 1994, Dwyer said.

According to his personnel file, Hodges was a college student when not training with the unit.

"We took a healthy kid out there on Friday and we didn't bring him home on Sunday," Dwyer said.

The lightning bolt hit the campsite around 5:15 a.m., while the men were sleeping in their tents, Dwyer said.

Dallas Morning News

May 5, 1998

Asian Security

Japan should ratify broader military ties with U.S.

Like the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, the U.S.-Japan security alliance was a bulwark against Communist expansionism during the Cold War. Like NATO, which redefined its mission after the Soviet Union's demise, the U.S.-Japan alliance must change to stay relevant.

Fortunately, Washington and Tokyo are doing that. In September, they set new conceptual guidelines for military cooperation. Last month, Japan's government proposed legislation that would implement those guidelines.

The need for change became apparent during the Persian Gulf War of 1991 and the Taiwan crisis of 1996, when China conducted threatening military exercises.

During each crisis, Japanese interests were threatened, the U.S. military was mobilized - and Japan's military did virtually nothing to help (though Japan contributed money to finance the gulf war effort).

In legitimate defense of its inaction, Japan cited its constitu-

tion, imposed by the United States after World War II, which forbids it to war. Japan has historically interpreted the document as preventing its forces from operating outside its territory or supporting U.S. forces engaged in combat unrelated to an invasion of Japan.

That may have been all right during the Cold War, when the United States was willing to shoulder almost the whole burden for Asia's defense and Japan's neighbors still had vivid memories of the country's depredations during World War II. It is not all right now, when collective defense is the watchword and memories of World War II are receding.

The guidelines would require Japan to provide noncombat support to U.S. forces in "areas surrounding Japan." The support would include mine sweeping and intelligence gathering.

The guidelines do not define in what surrounding areas Japan would operate. Japan would decide case by case. At least the parameters of possible Japanese action would be more strictly defined.

China worries about the alliance's expansion, just as Russia worries about NATO's. But the alliance, like NATO, has always been defensive. China should understand that the resulting enhancement of Asia's security would serve its interests too.

Japan's parliament should approve the legislation. Failure to do so would jeopardize future U.S.-Japan military cooperation.

Expanded NATO Will Keep the Light of Freedom Shining

WASHINGTON.

Last week, the U.S. Senate approved a Resolution of Ratification that would allow three new Central European democracies — Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic — to join the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). The three national security committees on which I serve spent an extraordinary amount of time examining the full ramifications of enlarging NATO, and I voted to support the expansion resolution.

The issue focuses largely on American leadership — in Europe and beyond. Expansion signifies that through our leadership, we have played a fundamental role in casting the light of freedom across Europe and are prepared, in peacetime or war, to guarantee the security of three new democracies.

CHARLES ROBB

Keeping the peace is something NATO has been doing well for 50 years. But when an entity works as well as NATO has, the American people tend to either ignore it, or take it for granted. We have come to think of Europe mostly as a market for our goods, and no longer as a territory under Soviet threat.

Public apathy aside, we forget at our peril the lessons of history that made the 20th Century the single bloodiest of all.

ON TWO occasions American isolationism has led to world wars. What we thought was benign neglect of Europe turned out to be an abject failure of our leadership. Harry Truman was right when he said that if NATO had existed in 1914 or 1939, we never would have seen the toll in human lives that followed.

It is an undeniable fact that NATO has contributed dramatically to Europe's peace, stability, and democracy the past 50 years, and hence to our own security. The alliance was integral to the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact in the 1980s...to tearing down the Berlin Wall in 1989...and to hastening the overall demise of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War.

Now, some wonder if it is still relevant, and express serious doubts as to whether we should expand it.

NATO is eminently relevant because it will be decades before we know with any certainty whether central Europe establishes itself as a model of democratic rule, or something less. It is not difficult to conjure up images of exclusive ethnic and latent ultra-nationalism underlying future conflict.

The historical legacy of the region generally is worrisome. World War I started with a mere gunshot in Sarajevo. And even recent history in the region shows that stability can't be treated as a foregone conclusion given the conflagration of the former Yugoslavia after Tito. And now Kosovo threatens to inflame the area all over again.

There's no question NATO has performed admirably in restoring a semblance of order in Bosnia. Yet the job is far from finished, and we face years of civil and political reconstruction. But NATO and American leadership have made the difference in resuscitating that country.

Bosnia demonstrates that the stakes are far too great to view NATO as some kind of anachronism. NATO is a vibrant, meaningful, omnipresent military institution that helps preserve a favorable security environment. And let me emphasize that it safeguards American vital interests. We don't lead NATO as a favor to Europe.

But perhaps the greatest challenge, or opportunity, in all this lies in developing a partnership between Russia and an expanded NATO. The Permanent Joint Council we've established with the Russians secures an important role for them in the new security architecture of Europe.

We should welcome their input and value their advice in charting a new course for the Continent. Russia, after all, has been a player in Europe for more than 300 years. We can, and should, pursue those mutual security concerns with Russia that contribute toward peace and stability in the Euro-Atlantic area.

At the same time, an expanded NATO will retain the right to act independently, as has been the case for 50 years. Its core purpose will continue to be to ensure its own security through collective defense.

Where there might be disagreements, Russia should not interpret NATO actions as trampling on its national security prerogatives. Rather, the aim of the alliance, in Vaclav Havel's words, "is first and foremost an instrument of democracy intended to defend mutually held and created political and spiritual values...[and is] the guarantor of Euro-American civilization."

NATO's expansion will erase the artificial lines drawn by Stalin, but is not and should not be perceived as a threat to Russia's security. It is in our interest — and we should provide tangible support — to develop Russia further as a peaceful democracy. Expanding NATO helps consolidate the hard-fought gains of winning the Cold War, and sets a useful example for Russia among its neighbors to continue with democratic reforms internally.

I BELIEVE strengthening NATO by expanding its ranks contributes to a peaceful, democratic, free, and unified Europe. As the security landscape of central Europe rapidly changes, we ought to take advantage of this historic moment. A static, cautionary approach misses the opportunity to extend democratic principles across Europe.

Vaclav Havel, perhaps better than anyone, has stripped away the layers of argument on each side, observing that "if the West does not stabilize the East, the East will destabilize the West."

Europe looks to the United States for leadership, and it is time for us to act.

■ Charles Robb is a United States Senator from Virginia.

Washington Times
May 5, 1998
Pg. 16

Embassy Row

by James Morrison

No pact with Yemen

The U.S. ambassador to Yemen yesterday denied a newspaper report that said the United States had reached a special agreement with Yemen for the regular visits of U.S. Navy ships.

"It has no basis at all," Ambassador Barbara Bodine said, referring to a story in the Yemen Times.

The story appeared as the USS Mount Vernon, an amphibious assault ship, arrived in the port city of Aden on the second visit by an American ship since April 1997.

Wall Street Journal
May 5, 1998
Pg. 1

Indonesian police braced for further unrest after the Suharto government sharply cut subsidies for fuel and electricity. The move is part of the terms of an IMF bailout. Gas stations were jammed ahead of today's 71% price increase.

South Korea's president said in an interview that rising unemployment poses the greatest threat to economic reform, but that he would stand up to unions. Kim Dae Jung said the government would investigate ex-officials' role in the economic crisis, but that his predecessor, Kim Young Sam, probably won't be implicated.

Tomb of Unknowns holds my brother

By PAT BLASSIE

IT has been 26 years since my father, mother, two sisters, brother and I learned that my brother, Air Force 1st Lt. Michael Blassie, was shot down while flying a fighter plane in Vietnam. Yet I would venture to say that his death affects my family more now than on that unforgettable day in May 1972 when we were told he had been killed.

Let it be known right here and now — Michael Blassie is not unknown. He is a hero, a son, a brother, a cousin, a friend, and he belongs home. That's why it's so important to my family that the Tomb of the Unknowns be exhumed — so we can put to rest once and for all what happened to Michael.

When asked, "Why is it important to bring this small amount of remains, just six bones, home to rest?" my dear mother, Jean, answers, "Because he's my son! I loved him. I still love him. He's in our hearts, and he should be home with us."

Yet this matter goes deeper than the Blassie family's desire. It goes to the very core of our nation. As a country, we stand for life, liberty and the pursuit of hap-

piness. Many have fought and died to insure that the American people enjoy these privileges. It's only right to do everything we can to recognize them and return them to their loved ones.

My family's saga started when Michael expressed interest in attending the Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs. We were so proud when he was accepted to the academy. It was there that his love for flying began.

After the academy, Michael went to flight school at Columbus Air Force Base in Mississippi. He wanted to fly the F-4 but had to settle for his second choice, the A-37 attack aircraft. We really didn't know the difference, or care. All we knew is that someone we loved was an Air Force pilot, and a good one. We were so proud.

Then he was off to Vietnam in January 1972. It was very sad to see Michael get on that commercial aircraft heading toward unknown territory. Our father, George, broke down that day. The rest of us just watched in the background, knowing this was a major step for

our family but not truly knowing there would be such hard-hitting consequences.

Words can't express how stunned we were to learn of Michael's death. It was an event that changed our lives forever.

A year later, the Air Force dedicated a building at Columbus AFB — a building where young men who remind me of my brother learn to become pilots — Blassie Hall in Michael's memory. Truly, that made us very proud. You see, it's one thing for us to think highly of our exceptional family member. It's another when the Air Force confirmed what we knew to be true, that Michael was extremely special, talented and a fine Air Force officer.

After the dedication, we all went about our lives quietly, tucking away the empty feeling of Michael being gone, with the understanding that he would probably never be returned to us.

Then, nearly 25 years later, we were shown U.S. documents stating that in October 1972, five months after Michael was shot down, remains were found near the crash

site with his identification card, money, ejection seat, portions of his flight suit and parachute, along with his

life raft, bolster and compass — all the things an A-37 pilot would carry. The documents revealed, and the government confirmed, that those remains are indeed the very ones that were selected for internment in the Tomb of the Unknowns.

This information hit us with such force, it was as if no time had passed since Michael's death. The Blassie family knew it was time to take action. Michael would have expected no less of us.

Exhuming the Tomb of the Unknowns isn't something the Blassie family takes lightly. The monument is central to remembering the price paid for our freedom. It is hallowed ground. Yet this shouldn't stand in the way of any family who only wants an answer.

It's time to put Michael Blassie to rest.

Pat Blassie is Michael's youngest sister.

Washington Post

May 2, 1998

Pg. 14

NATO Warns Croats Not To Attack Serbs

DRVAR, Bosnia -- Backed by Apache helicopters and armored vehicles, NATO's top commander toured this violence-ravaged town to warn hard-line Croats against attacking returning Serbs. Gen. Wesley Clark, an American, visited Drvar with

Gen. Eric Shinseki, the alliance's commander in Bosnia, and Carlos Westendorp, Bosnia's top international mediator.

The visit -- and the tight security surrounding it -- underlined the uneasiness following a riot last week by 1,500 Croats who burned Serb homes and aid offices, overturned vehicles and hurled stones at Serbs and U.N. peacekeepers. About 20 people were injured.

At Presstime

Top U.S. general arrives in "threatened" Colombia

BOGOTA, May 4 (Reuters) - A top U.S. general who has said Colombia's armed forces are incapable of defeating rival Marxist rebels arrived in Bogota yesterday for meetings with senior military and police officials.

The visit by Gen. Charles Wilhelm, chief of the Miami-based U.S. Southern Command, underscores deepening

American concern about what he has called a deteriorating military situation.

Security sources said Wilhelm, accompanied by Brian Sheridan, a senior Clinton administration Pentagon official, was to meet with Colombian Defense Minister Gilberto Echeverri, Gen. Manuel Jose Bonett, commander of the Colombian armed forces and National Police chief Gen. Rosso Jose Serrano.

Today, according to police and military sources, Wilhelm will visit southern Cauca province, where rebels killed up to 83 members of an elite counter-insurgency brigade in March

and took 43 others prisoner.

In an interview last week with Reuters, the Marine general called the worsening conflict in Colombia the most serious challenge facing the U.S. military in Latin America.

Army Blasts White House, Pentagon

WASHINGTON (AP) House Majority Leader Dick Armey called for the resignations Monday of an Air Force official and a top White House aide over a memo the Texas Republi-

can said showed the administration had "outrageously politicized the military base-closing process."

Armey urged the resignations of acting Air Force Secretary F. Whitten Peters and John Podesta, the deputy White House chief of staff. A White House spokesman dismissed Armey's suggestion as political posturing.

At issue is an April 26 Air Force memo, made public by congressional Republicans, from Peters to Deputy Defense Secretary John Hamre.

In it, Peters discussed an upcoming meeting that Hamre was to have with an official of Lockheed Martin on the subject of work being farmed out to the private sector with the closing of McClellan Air Force Base in Sacramento, Calif.

Battleships' Fate Stirs Competition

WASHINGTON (AP) America's outdated battleships no longer rule the waves, but they still command a lot of attention. The four that remain in the Navy's possession are at the center of one last battle: States on both coasts are vying to turn three into museums.

And some in Congress say these mothballed behemoths remain unrivaled in firepower and intimidation and at least two should stay in military reserve.

The USS Missouri is already bequeathed to Pearl Harbor, and that leaves several states scrapping for the rights to the USS New Jersey, the Iowa and the Wisconsin.

The competing interests collide this week on Capitol Hill. The Senate Armed Services Committee will consider whether to free up the USS New Jersey to become a museum on New Jersey's waterfront a move that would take the USS Iowa out of donation status, frustrating efforts to turn it into a museum in San Francisco.

On all sides of the debate is an abiding respect for the four Iowa Class battleships the New Jersey, Missouri, Iowa and Wisconsin launched between 1942 and 1944 and active in conflicts from World War II to the Persian Gulf War.

"For a show of force, you can't beat the battleship," said William L. Stearman, director of the U.S. Naval Fire Support Association. "Only the battleship can belly up to a hostile area and show the flag and be a show of force."

Forbes Knocks Clinton on Defense

WASHINGTON (AP) Former Republican presidential candidate Steve Forbes accused the Clinton administration yesterday of "systematically dismantling" the nation's defense structure and reducing military-readiness with spending cuts.

"It is systematically stripping away America's military might. It is severely weakening our ability to defend ourselves, to project our power, or to protect our allies and interests," the business magazine publisher told the Center for National Policy in New York. A text of his remarks was released in Washington.

Forbes, who sought the GOP nomination in 1996 and is considered likely to try again in 2000, said the United States spends less on defense as a percentage of the economy than it has since before World War II. "We're spending a wee bit more than 3 percent of (the gross domestic product) on defense, the least we've spent since the neglectful 1930s," he said.

If unchecked, Forbes said, military and diplomatic weakness could seriously undermine the nation's wealth, global prosperity and the way the nation deals with foreign nations on issues such as the Asian financial crisis.

Slovaks more enthusiastic on NATO

BRATISLAVA, May 5 (Reuters) - An increasing majority of Slovaks support their country's bid to join NATO, an opinion poll published today said.

Slovakia, once a member of the Warsaw Pact as part of communist Czechoslovakia, was the only country excluded from the first group of candidates for NATO membership in 1997, because of failings in its political system.

But the poll, conducted by the independent Public Affairs Institute (IVO) among a representative sample of 918 respondents in the first two weeks of April, showed support for NATO membership growing to 58 percent, from 51 percent in a similar IVO poll six months ago.

Taiwan schedules "anti-communist" invasion drill

TAIPEI, May 5 (Reuters) - Taiwan said today it would hold annual military exercises on May 11-14 and said they were designed explicitly to thwart an invasion by "communist forces" -- the People's Liberation Army of arch rival China.

"The exercise targets the biggest threat -- any possible military actions by the communist forces to invade Taiwan," defense ministry spokesman Kung Fan-ting was quoted by the state-funded Central News Agency as saying.

Kung said the code-named Han Kwang drills would involve all three branches of the armed forces and be staged around Hualien and Taitung, along Taiwan's relatively undeveloped eastern coast -- the flank that does not face the communist mainland.

Kung said the manoeuvres, which are routine and always expected at this time of year, would be closed to the public and media, a departure from previous practice.

China hits out at Indian defense minister

BEIJING, May 5 (Reuters) - China today expressed "utmost regret and resentment" at comments by India's defense minister over the military threat posed by Beijing and warned they could sabotage friendly relations.

Defense Minister George Fernandes said Sunday that China had built a sophisticated electronic surveillance base in Myanmar's Coco Islands and was beefing up airfields in Tibet to take supersonic fighters capable of striking at India's borders.

Four Australian sailors killed in tanker fire

PERTH, Australia; May 5 (Reuters) - Four Australian sailors died today and five were injured when a fire broke out on a navy tanker in the Indian Ocean off west Australia, a defense department spokesman said.

"There are four confirmed dead," the spokesman told Reuters.

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